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The evolution of America

[University, N.D.]

[1915]

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The evolution of America.
p. [287]-299. 24½ cm.
p. [125]-137
Reprint from the Quarterly journal of the University of North Dakota, Vol. V, no. 4, July, 1915.

188228

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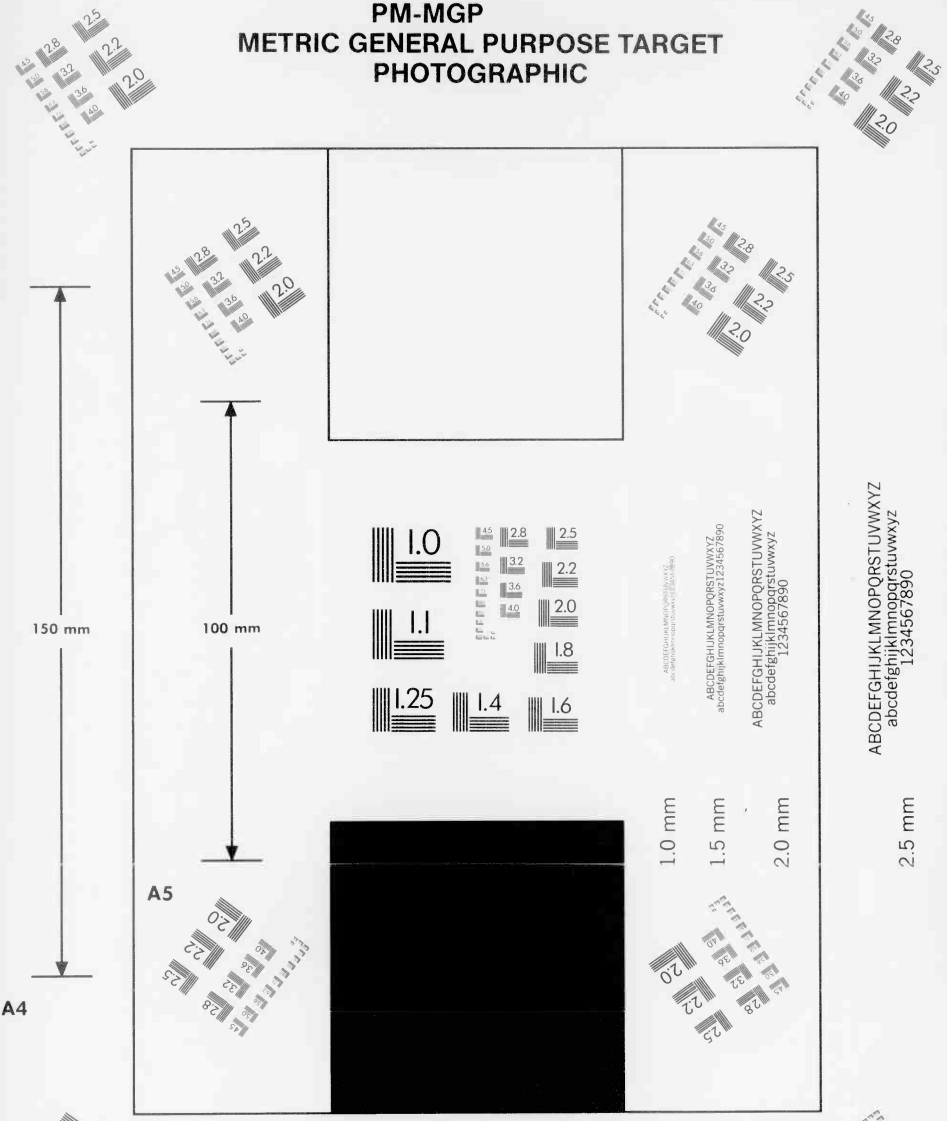

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The Evolution of America

Recent Social and Industrial Tendencies in the United States

FRANK L. MCVEY

Reprint from the QUARTERLY JOURNAL of the University of North Dakota, Vol. VI, No. 2, January, 1916
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The Quarterly Journal

VOLUME 5 JULY, 1915 NUMBER 4

The Evolution of America*

FRANK L. MCVEY,

President of the University of North Dakota

I am taking it for granted that the audience which has gathered here for the purpose of listening to what I may have to say will be interested in America. The topics chosen for the two lectures deal with certain phases of national development. The first lecture bears the title *The Evolution of America.* The second has been designated *Recent Social Tendencies in the United States.*

Undoubtedly you feel with me that I have undertaken much to tell the story of a nation, even tho it be that of a young nation, within the confines of an evening lecture. Still in that length of time an outline can be placed before you so that there may be a clearer concept of what present-day problems mean in this western land. Without the historical background it is impossible to understand even in a limited degree what is now taking place in the United States. Nor must we overlook the important fact that there has been going on in the United States for 200 years the largest experiment in Democracy that has ever been undertaken in the history of the globe. During this time men have turned to it as the hope of democracy; of late their hopes have been dimmed by what they beheld in the seeming domination of industrialism and the lowering of the ideals of the founders; but that, too, may be regarded as a part of the evolutionary process thru which it will be necessary to pass before real democracy of its own volition rules in America.

In the books of history the year 1776 stands famous for achievement. In that year the Declaration of Independence was written and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* published. It likewise marked the line between the old and the new system of production, the awakening of democracy, and the dawn of modern industrialism.

* President McVey spent the summer of 1912 traveling in Europe. While the trip was being planned, he received an invitation from the University of Christiana to deliver two addresses at that institution dealing with conditions in America. He spent a portion of the month of September in Norway, and on the 4th and 5th gave the addresses in question. The article here presented on **The Evolution of America** is the first of two. The second, discussing **Recent Social Tendencies in the United States,** will appear in a subsequent number of the Quarterly Journal, probably that of January, 1916. (Editor.)

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It is not to be wondered at that America's history so clearly identified with this period of awakening should show so many phases akin to those of the times. The key, however, is not to be found in the story of Europe, but rather in the settlement of a vast territory by waves of population that have prest continually toward the West. This interesting phenomenon has been continued, thru the addition to the territory of the nation, until the last decade of the nineteenth century, but it has been accompanied by the exploitation of natural resources, the setting up of a political philosophy of *laissez faire,* a conflict of interests and the struggle for supremacy by the people. Nevertheless, until recent years there was a real democracy in the United States, because the society created was based upon essential equality in material possessions and the contest for wealth was undisturbed by the organization of vast capital such as now comes in. With the combination of both men and wealth an increasing inequality has made its appearance accompanied by the multiplying of occupations, the widening of the breach between rich and poor, and the enlargement of the differences between the cultivated and the uncultivated. The processes of this evolution are already to be observed in the larger cities, but as yet the old democracy of material possessions holds true to the original basis of national growth in the country districts and smaller towns. There is as a consequence uncertainty as to whether the same phenomena will take place in agricultural America, and if it does what will be the outcome. Are we to have a land-holding class, a peasantry, and all the social phenomena to be observed in Europe?

Comparatively easy as it is for the American to recognize the fundamentals of development in his own country, it has been difficult for the European student to grasp the essentials of a movement so different from that seen in Europe. The contrast at the time of the opening of the Industrial Revolution in England between the conditions seen in America and those found in England will bring out more clearly than perhaps anything else the change that has taken place in the United States. England entered upon the industrial revolution at the opening of the nineteenth century with well developed political institutions. The people of America began their industrial revolution with a newly formed constitution, with a national debt, and with a small conception of the vast changes that were to take place in their country. A new order was created in the industrial system in England between the Declaration of Independence and the Battle of Waterloo; in America successive waves of population followed each other across the continent. The savage

was succeeded by the hunter, the hunter by the trader, the trader by the rancher, the rancher by the farmer, and the latter by the manufacturer with his accompanying organization of city and factory system. In time the period extends a hundred years after the adoption of the constitution; the movement has been now quick, now slow, in the development of trade, commerce, transportation, and manufacture.

Cultivated farms, towns, and cities were the possessions of England when the great industrial changes began; in America the people were compelled to conquer forests, to make roads and bridges, and to subdue nature. The story of English growth is the story of an organized society gradually casting aside the old and accepting the new, while the history of America is the story of free land, its settlement, and the advancement toward the west of American civilization,—a story, indeed, of reversion to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, where the social development of the last settlement was restarted and replanted. The Americans were an expanding people, demanding in some cases new institutions and in others the alteration of those brought to American shores by the English. Thus social development was continually beginning over again on the frontier; it was productive of excessive indiviualism, creating as a result a "free land democracy," intolerant of restraint and lax of government, and leading in the long run to difficult problems which have been obliterated or entirely avoided in countries where democracy was an evolution in a limited area instead of an expansion over a vast territory.

In America the movement was largely that of an unfolding of industry giving the laborer plenty of time to adjust himself to the new conditions. There was no landed aristocracy, land was free to every man, and he could undertake its cultivation if he wished, and employ such capital and labor as he possest. Every farmer was his own landlord and his own laborer. Outside of a few office holders all classes were merged into one great class, a condition due to the fact that no one would be a laborer and work for wages when he could get land of his own to cultivate. In consequence there was a social uniformity and equality prevailing in America in strong contrast to that existing in England. As the laborer had the option of working with his own tools, he was always able to secure the results of his labor. In these earlier days he occupied the position of capitalist, manufacturer, and manager. Perhaps no one single instance typifies the status of society so well as does the position of the man who labors with his hands. In America

this is particularly true, and the democracy existing in the land has been mesured by the ups and downs of the common man.

For the purpose of guiding the discussion of the evening and at the same time emphasizing the periods in the history of the country, it will be necessary to call attention to seven different epochs into which the history of the United States may be divided. The first of these is the time of colonial adjustments, lasting from 1608 to 1776. This is followed by nearly fifty years of national formation, appropriately ending in 1820. From that date on to 1850 it is possible to speak of the rise of the West as a dominating factor. Beginning in 1850 and lasting to 1870 is a period that can be referred to as the conflict of sections, in which the Civil War occurred. The fifth span of time is marked by the railroad and industrial development of the twenty years from 1870 to 1890, and this was followed, almost as a matter of course, by a decade of consolidation and monopoly, bringing us to the close of the nineteenth century. The first ten years of the twentieth century, the seventh period, marks, appropriately enough, the beginning of the era of political reforms and social awakening. In the consideration of any period in the history of the United States it can not be impress too strongly upon the student that every period is one of transition, not only in governmental development but in the expansion of industry, and the enlargement of the frontier.

Let us discuss briefly these periods in the order named:

I

Period of Colonial Adjustments

1608-1776

The two and a half centuries of colonial history show many social and industrial phases that are the forerunners of later developments in both government and industry. Left alone by the English kings, the colonies were allowed to grow in their own way. Thus there appeared along the Atlantic seaboard many types of colonial organization. From time to time the colonies were forced into something like co-operation with each other because of the presence of warlike Indian tribes and of hostile European neighbors upon their borders, They quarrelled among themselves over the intercolonial traffic, developed ship building, carried on agriculture, and created a commerce with the West Indies and Europe that brought them, in time, in conflict with the economic interests of the mother country. The specific things for which the colonists stood were representative government, liberal laws as applied to their trade, and full ownership of the soil. There was from the beginning a scarcity of labor; there was a lack of capital and a dearth of wealth for a monetary system. Needing quick returns for effort, settlers began at once the exploitation of natural resources. Slavery soon made its appearance, troubles over monetary standards arose, and a rampant individualism grew out of the conditions that acceeded grudgingly to the comments of a distant government. In this struggle with nature, however, a fine type of man and woman was developed, ready to meet difficulties and anxious to create, in a new country, social institutions that would be lasting. The colonies emerged from this period with the outline of government well developed. The conflict between the executive and the legislative had been fought, the control of the purse determined, and the principles of representative government fully established. But monetary standards, banking, and control of commerce were still problems that could not be solved by the small individual colony since its authority did not extend into the territory of its neighbor. More important than these advances were the spirit of the people and their feeling of loyalty to the principles of representative government.

II

National Formation

1776-1820

As a consequence of her success in the Seven Years' War England had become an empire; when the second period opens the neglected colonies were no longer to be neglected by the mother country and the principle of the mercantile system which had been remoulded by the genius of Oliver Cromwell was to be applied once more to the English plantations. Such action threatened the freedom of government, the freedom of trade, and the freedom from taxation which the colonies had enjoyed. The problem from the English point of view was largely a matter of applying in a thoro-going fashion the mercantile system of an earlier day as the basis of the relation between the mother country and the colonies. The restrictive mesures determined upon in the deliberations of Parliment aroused irritation, and resulted in the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War.

The two belligerents, mesured by the conditions under which they fought, were about equally matched. The Americans were hampered by lack of union, poor organization, and failure of credit; while the English were at too long a distance from their source of supplies, were indifferently led, and were divided at home upon the

policy of the war. This conflict for the independence of the American colonists presented two phases. Of the first much has been written but of the other little has found its way into the books. The revolt against English rule was the work of the people of the Atlantic seaboard, while the winning of the western territory, which has proven to be the great heritage of the nation, was brought about by the pioneer settlers who had pushed their way over the Alleghanies into the valleys of the Ohio and the Tennessee. In a single year, 1788-1789, a writer of the early day tells us that 20,000 people, 7,000 horses, 3,000 cows, 900 sheep, and 600 wagons passed Fort Harmon on the Ohio. This is an example of the moving into the West, whose very bigness was absorbed into the settler's makeup, which accounts in the main for the struggle with the English and Nor is it to be overlooked in the hurry of writing history that the Indians long after the articles of peace had been signed in 1783. placing of settlements on the Mississippi, the use of the great river as a highway to market, and the belligerent note of settlers in the Valley hastened the elimination of Spain from American territory and facilitated the Louisiana purchase from Napoleon.

Having been freed from the English colonial policy as a consequence of the Revolution, the people of the United States anticipated with eagerness the opportunity to enter into larger trade relations with other nations. They were doomed to disappointment; the governments were unwilling to consider negotiations with a state so insecure and possessing so little authority. The Continental Congress that had held tenaciously to its power broke down before the war was finished, and the Confederacy which succeeded it fared but little better in the interval between the treaty of peace and the formation of the constitution. It became clearer as time went on that the Americans must have a central government which should possess common authority over interstate trade, the issue of money, the declaration of war, the maintenance of troups, etc.

The commercial independence thus hoped for did not come until after the second war with Great Britain. Meantime, the nation, having established a constitution, began to create the necessary factors in the governmental organization; and so a tariff policy was established, a national bank organized, a monetary plan created, patent laws made into statutes, and the governmental organization developed. Thru the wise leadership of Washington, the far-seeing capacity of Hamilton, and the judicial shrewdness of Marshall the Federal government was finally formed and made a definite part of the national organization.

III

Rise of the West

1820-1850

While the treaty of 1783 gave to the United States the territory east of the Mississippi, it was only the beginning of the problem, since government must be established and order maintained therein. The famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787 laid down the principles of organization for the new territory and formulated the rules upon which future states should be created and the methods of bringing local governments into existence. Congress was called upon to administer to the needs of an empire and to provide governmental machinery. This task was, in the earlier stages, more than it could well deal with in view of the finances and weaknesses of the general government operating over vast distances. Tho the thought of law and order was instinctive in the larger sense, to the settler the requirements of a remote government seemed unnecessary and quite in opposition to his sturdy individualism which was willing to build roads and bridges if needed or fight the Indians when called upon to do so. In fact the West has ever been a gate open to the poor, the discontented, the opprest, and the ambitious. It gave opportunity for new careers, and a chance to build homes on new lands. "Abundant space in America has meant abundant opportunity and a chance for all to rise; it has developed in the American a powerful initiative and encouraged the democratic spirit." While doing this and while endowing the American people with one of their greatest qualities, it has at the same time increased the difficulties of government and made cooperative effort harder to secure in an atmosphere of intense individualism.

In the South and Southwest new states were being moulded from the territory acquired by the nation. There the cultivation of the staple product, cotton, was introduced, and the industrial organization of the tide-water lands in the Carolinas and Georgia established on new soil. The Americans from the Atlantic seaboard were filling the Northwest Territory, and upon the acquirement of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 the settlers upon the eastern side of the Mississippi pushed into the new possessions and took up lands there.

IV

Conflict of Sections

1850—1870

As this process of settlement went on in the North the slavery system was extended in the Southwest. And the cotton crop, having increased materially in value, now became an important economic factor which took away from slavery much of the family spirit with which it had been associated in the earlier history of Virginia. The figures of cotton production in 1811-1820 bring out the extent to which the commercial process had gone. In the first year, 1811, five million pounds of cotton were produced in the southland, and in the last named, 1820, sixty million. In the meantime the predominance of New England in national affairs had declined and its relative importance decreased as a factor in political life. This change in political dominance was indicated by the failure of the Federalists to hold the control of government after 1824 and the appearance of a new party under the leadership of Jefferson. Likewise there appeared an increasing tolerance and a marked bearing away from the religious dominance of any one church.

Changes, however, in the life of the nation were not confined to political or religious ones, but economic and social conditions were materially modified in the next quarter of a century. The national bank established largely as a result of Hamilton's report in 1791, was refused a recharter in 1811 only five years later to be reestablished and extended for twenty years. About this bank, nevertheless, waged the great political warfare from 1827 to 1837 resulting in the abolishment of the bank and a remarkable modification in the economic organization. The state banks were created and many private ones brought into existence as a consequence of the downfall of the National Bank. There set in at once a period of land speculation, wild-cat banking, and depreciated currency that was intensified by the panic of 1837 and which lasted for a number of years. Looked at from the vantage ground of the present, this period is regarded as the time when democracy, meaning the rule of the people, had been in a mesure lost. The vigorous exponent of this democracy in the middle west was elected president in 1829 and held the office until 1836. Andrew Jackson may be said to have brought the actual rule of the people nearer to a realization than any of his predecessors.

The movement of population referred to previously soon found its way to considerable distances from navigable streams and as a result raised new questions of transportation. The Erie Canal was the forerunner of the means of transportation, solving in some degree the difficulties that had arisen thru the pushing of the settlers westward. For twenty years after the panic of 1837 there was a marked expansion of transportation facilities in the form of canals, roads, and a few railways sufficient so long as the settlements were confined largely to the Ohio valley. So soon, however, as the immigration moved beyond the great rivers the difficulty of transportation became more pressing. All of this effort to produce wealth began to show in a larger per capita possession. The discovery of gold in California was hailed as a great event frought with meaning for larger national wealth. The merchant marine, under the stimulus of the low cost of ship-building, developed by leaps and bounds. Moreover, there had been a steady movement towards a low tariff, and manufacturing, despite this so-called handicap, continued to flourish. It was a period too, of internal improvements many of the states levied taxes for the building of roads and canals, which supplemented in some measure the capital of New England, that had been created thru manufacturing, sea traffic, and fishing and was now being used to build canals and railroads. Perhaps even more important was the granting of federal aid in the form of land and money for the establishment of such enterprises. The banks that had been plunged into a period of speculation after the destruction of the United States Bank had re-established themselves between the years 1843 and 1853, and now under the influence of the internal improvements movement had entered into financial speculation that finally resulted in the panic of 1857.

While the North was thus progressing in the matter of manufacturing, railroads, and transportation facilities generally, the South had become more markedly commercial in its method of dealing with the cotton industry. In the early days, from 1790 to 1800, there was a stronger anti-slave sentiment in Virginia than in New England. Even as late as 1831 an emancipation bill had been debated in the Virginia legislature, and in 1849 the Kentucky legislature took up a mesure of that kind. Emancipation by slave owners was a common thing, and it is said that in the decade before the Civil War over twenty thousand slaves were set free, while in 1860 the free colored population to be found in the United States number half a million. This movement was restricted by the fact that there was no place for the free negro in the American system either of government or industry. Cotton, however, became more and more an economic factor not only in the life of the southern

states, but in the industry of England and of New England. By 1840 the capital invested in plantations growing cotton amounted to 327 millions of dollars, and it was clearly demonstrated, at least to the satisfaction of the planters, that large scale production required negro labor. As history has shown, the money interest in slave labor, as in the case of many other things, intensified the problem and finally resulted in carrying it into the legislative halls. The question as to which policy should control and how far slavery should be extended into new territory was developed by the constantly westward pushing population. and finally thru many phases brought on what is known in history as the Civil War. The North was a great industrial and manufacturing section, while the South was a vast agricultural region devoted to cotton cropping. The property in the North was worth more than eleven billions of dollars, while that in the South was worth less than one-half of this. Two billions were invested in slaves and one and one-half billion in the property devoted to cotton raising.

V.

Railroad and Industrial Development

1870—1890

The termination of the Civil War brought many results, and with its ending a new epoch is marked in our national history. It was clearly demonstrated that the federal government was superior in its authority to that of the individual states, slavery was checked, and many other questions solved as a consequence. But the government of the slave states, and the money and banking question still remained important for the consideration of the people.

The problem of reconstruction confronting Congress was threefold in character. The first phase was to restore the confidence of the people of the South and give them a part in the federal government without straining the machinery of government. The second problem was the negro. What to do with him, how to make him a citizen and at the same time hold him in the southland as an economic agent. There were also problems of finance brought on by the losses of war, heavy debts and the annual interest charges. Besides, France and England had raised serious international problems, the first by her conduct in Mexico and the second thru her neglect of international curtesies in the Alabama case. Such in the main were the political and governmental problems awaiting solution at the close of the Civil War.

The clumsy device of national banks was brought into existence

as the outcome of the Civil War and in it were to be found many of the elements of the modern system; but the old pressure for cheap money was still felt because of the lack of capital in agricultural districts and a general misunderstanding as to the purpose and function of money. The war was followed by a rush for new lands, the extension of railways, and the beginning of the period of industrial development that lasted until 1890. The war prices and war tariffs inaugurated as a consequence of governmental action, together with the other conditions, brought on a period of speculation, of over-buying, of expansion that resulted in the panic of 1873 and a check to the industrial debauchery of the time. In this period, however, many things took place. The homestead land acts were passed, opening to settlers the Indian territory and the new lands in the possession of Congress, the labor movement was revived, transcontinental lines were projected, and many attempts at legislation looking towards regulation were introduced. Public education became more and more marked; the states in the northwest endowed the public schools with large areas of land and the federal government grants for state universities were being utilized for the establishment of great institutions of learning. The period was also marked, however, by many disturbances,—the strikes of 1873 and 1883, the industrial depression of 1884, and particularly the farmers' movement, which was a protest against the policy of the railroads in managing their freight business, especially the rates that were placed upon the movement of freight from the interior to tide-water. Nevertheless, there was an immense growth in agricultural exports, and as the period passed a gradual adjustment of railroad matters took place, and some relief from these growing pains of the nation was to be discerned by the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. But the problem of money legislation had continued and from the paper money of the Civil War period the demand had passed to that for silver legislation; but this matter was finally settled in the great campaign of 1896 by the confirmation of the gold standard as the basis for money in the United States. In the meantime the Southern states had awakened from their lethargy, due to the Civil War and the period of political reconstruction which followed, and were beginning to use their resources to build railroads and to establish themselves as an industrial region.

VI

Consolidation and Monopoly

1890—1900

A great difference of opinion on the money question existed as between the East and the West for the same reason that the earlier settlers of the Atlantic seaboard had resorted to paper devices for money purposes. The silver purchase act of 1878 and that of 1890 were passed to meet this feeling but both were repealed in 1893. Recovery from the depression of 1884 and the panic of 1897 was slow, but the results taught their lesson and the march toward a renewed prosperity began. In the previous periods attempts had been made by the railroad companies and corporations to protect their interests thru the formation of pools. These however, were discouraged by state law, and out of it came, as a consequence of the extension of competition, the ingenuous system of trusts. The Sherman Act of 1890 prohibited the continuance of any organization that looked toward the restraint of trade, and in order to avoid what was so clearly implied by the law, the "trust" passed into the form of the great corporation. On good authority we are told that the capital of newly formed combinations in the year 1899 reached three and one-half billions of dollars. This in itself was sufficient indication of the extent to which combination had taken place. The United States Steel Company, the largest single corporation created, is another example, while numerous instances might be mentioned of the amalgamation of railroads into systems coming under the control of comparatively few persons.

Meantime, the census of 1900 showed a marked change in the national situation. The Mississippi Valley is no longer the edge of the country, but the core and dominant factor in it, while the center of population crossed the state of Ohio and is now found in Indiana. The westward movement of population continued, but at a distinctly diminishing rate, while the frontier, which had been so marked a factor in the history of the nation, was no longer spoken of in the reports of the census experts. A study of the export and import figures, together with a consideration of the traffic and industry in the country, shows that the United States had reached the stage of self-sufficiency so long desired by the production statesmen.

VII

Era of Political Reform and Social Awakening

1900—

The last period is one that may be designated as a time of awakening. The people had come to a clearer recognition of the trend of things. The glamour of material wealth, and national greatness in the markets of the world had lost much of their fascination, and a more definite view of the real purpose of national life was substituted for the indefiniteness of thought that had been the possession of the average man.

The Interstate Commerce Act governing common carriers had been modified in 1904 and 1907. The schemes for the control of gigantic railroad combinations were checked by the decision of the court in the Northern Securities Case. The legislative actions of the courts hindered the consolidation movement, while the tariff policy of war memory was looked upon as an evil to be remedied. Everywhere there was a clearer recognition of what government means and what the problems confronting the people were. The centralizing of banks, railroad companies, and industrial corporations went steadily on. The appeal to the nation's sense of greatness and of world commerce brought it under the spell of a gigantic industrialism. Free land had dissappeared. Irrigation was suggested as a means of supplementing the opportunity of the earlier day by the utilization of great desert areas. Legislation was enacted to check immigration, and there was a hardening of the lines of social cleavage to be found everywhere. Together with all this was a clearer recognition of the trend of government, and a fear was present manifesting the basis of the demand for a larger democracy, for the establishment of the initiative and referendum, the creation of the primary ballot, and the recognition of universal suffrage. There is also with all of this demand for a larger democracy a recognition of efficiency as a factor in government.

In this story of three centuries, it would appear from what has been said, that a great deal of history has been crowded into a short period. We are approaching in the United States more nearly European conditions. Progress will be less rapid in the future than in the past. Free lands as the basis of a great democracy have passed away, and now the United States will enter upon a period of adjustment, in the course of which there must be worked out the necessary machinery for the conduct of government in a republic on the basis of the recognition of the rights of a people to govern themselves not under the simple conditions of a hundred years ago, but under those of the present.

Recent Social and Industrial Tendencies in the United States

FRANK L. MCVEY

Reprint from the QUARTERLY JOURNAL of the University of North Dakota, Vol. VI, No. 2, January, 1916

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Recent Social and Industrial Tendencies in the United States*

FRANK L. MCVEY,

President of the University of North Dakota

IN the past decade a marked change has passed over the American people. Looking inwardly they have seen many things in a new light. Their attitude now is almost prayerful, and as a people they have entered into a period of questioning. Conscious of great advancement in the arts, and certain of amazing progress in the field of industrial organization, they are by no means so sure of themselves as they were twenty-five years ago.

This decade is rightly to be put down in the history of America as one of the great periods. It marks the beginning of a battle for a completer social and economic freedom, and has been well said to be a time of regulation and social awakening. In the past quarter of a century a notable increase in the diffusion of wealth among the masses, a bettering of the conditions of labor and the development of an increasingly independent and prosperous farming class have been brought about. As yet no great proletariat has recruited itself from a disappearing landed class. Progress has been made out of surplus and education has born fruit in a larger intelligence and a closer inspection of the basis and methods of government. There is no denying, however, that a plutocracy has arisen. At the top of the social structure is a great concentration of wealth, but the attitude which the people as a whole have taken at the present time stands out in strong contrast to the days when the captains of industry were extravagantly praised. Now a new social ideal has become one of the heritages of the Republic and the terms of everyday speech have included in themselves such phrases as social consciousness and money power. The country to-day is animated by more than a common devotion to ideals and the conceptions which the people have are not so much those of knowledge and of practise, as those of faith. Thru all the decades in which Americans have been face to face with innumerable practical questions there has without doubt been retained in the body of the people an elemental spiritual honesty, regardless of the opinion of foreign critics to the contrary and of the pessimistic views of our own hermit philosophers

* This article is the second of two addresses given by President McVey at the University of Christiania, Norway, in September, 1912. The first, on **The Evolution of America**, is found in the Quarterly Journal of July, 1915, Vol. V, pp.287-299.—(Editor).

that this is a decadent age. In its essence the problem which faces America is to make the democracy of the fathers, so called, a reality.

The characteristics of the modern American can be traced back to the time of Elizabethan England. In the reign of that celebrated soveren England and America parted ways, and there was planted in the new world a type of character that has continued in the main since that time. It was the customary principle of the Puritans that life should be governed by ideal inspiration, which the conditions of life, such as the contact with nature, brought about in more than the usual way. It kept men simple and it helped maintain the ideals that they had established in the earlier day. They learned, too, the practical lesson that life cannot be conducted on abstract principles; hence their attitude was uncritical, but they possest at the same time an instinctive faith in their own integrity. To the initiated it does not seem peculiar that men should now busy themselves with the moral development of the nation in the light of the history of the past. It was natural that men should come to think that democracy consists in the dependence of the government upon the ballot box, and that this would be a sufficient means thru which control of legislation and administration by popular will could be firmly established. The growth of great wealth has consequently raised the problem of diverting anti-socially used wealth to the social account and of maintaining the economic and political independence of the average man without the control and direction of a plutocracy. Consequently, the problem of democracy in America as well as in England is economic in character. How to control colossal wealth, which in various ways threatens to strangle the public life, is the fundamental and essential question which now confronts the American. Markedly in contrast with this situation in the United States is that in England, where the problem is not one of control of wealth, but rather how to retard the extension of poverty. In America men look to the means of prevention; in England they hope to palliate by alms, old-age pensions, and accident insurance, and to prevent the burden and cost of industrial progress resting too heavily upon the poor.

The problem in America just outlined above is affected by several material influences. One is the interpretation of the law, another is the presence of the immigrant, and a third the deterring influences upon the family, as seen in divorce and in many other minor effects of a rather economic character that are found in the tariff, the parcels post question, the ownership of public utilities, and of the prohibition movement, of which the limitations of time prevent speaking. These

influences and others yet to be mentioned will be taken up and briefly discust.

I

The Interpretation of Law*

It has been the feeling in the United States that law can be made to meet every emergency, and moreover that the defects existent in industrial and social affairs can be remedied thru legislation. On its surface the legal situation in America seems to be comparatively simple, yet there is the greatest complexity, as is illustrated by the powers of congress, the state legislatures, city councils, county commissioners, and township boards, as well as by our system of judicial procedure. To keep all of this governmental machinery in order has been a difficult task, but the courts have been animated by the idea of keeping the machinery going. Consequently we have seen many legal makeshifts, in which the main reliance has been upon the judiciary to give to constitutions vital force and to interpret the law. We have not troubled ourselves about the harmony of law and have not been sensitive regarding the differences between honestly accepted precepts and what appear to be flagrant practises. As a result of this attitude, little by little the old idea of the sacredness of law has been affected. From time to time, tho not to the same degree as formal statutes, laws have been made for specific purposes, often badly drawn, with resultant injustice as a consequence when they are applied. From time to time the courts have been forced to the necessity of declaring such laws unconstitutional, often in behalf of the rights of the minority, and so far as this attitude on the part of the courts squared with common sense and justice the decisions have been approved by the people. When the courts have used mere regularity of procedure, as a matter of precedent or the usage of the court itself, independent of good sense, they have lost public confidence. In the contests that make their appearance in legislatures it may be said that the acts of such bodies represent political majorities; the acts of the courts are due to an attitude toward precedent, and the great public not represented in the political majority have come to look upon themselves as having no representation in the interpretation of the law. The sacredness of the law, consequently, is threatened, not by any feeling of hostility to law as such on the part of the people, but by the departure of the courts from the common sense view represented in the decisions of

* See in connection with this topic Hadley's **Standards of Public Morality**, Chapter IV.

the earlier courts. There are, however, some indications, here and there, of a movement back to the old-time point of view. What proportions this movement will finally assume, one can only predict.

A tendency toward the determination of legislation thru the agency of sectional representation, regardless of national interests, has come to be increasingly a factor in national government. It may be said that the government of the United States is based upon an agreement of two sets of agents. A representation from given districts results oftentimes in hampering the only man who has national ideals in mind as against the many without such ideals. It has come to be recognized that if the president cannot control government, and congress cannot control government, there comes in, as a consequence of our sectional method of representation, the boss with his political machinery. And the consequence of this is the demand for the election of senators by the people, the call for the initiative and referendum, and the establishment of the short ballot, which all look toward the purpose of establishing democracy on its old basis, so as to give control to a larger public rather than to any one section of it. It will be sometime before any of these mesures are greatly effective, but one cannot help seeing that the movement of thought is in that general direction.

In all of this situation we have not been clear as to the ethics of public morals. We have begun to suspect also that the republicans are no longer conducting the government on one economic theory and the democrats on another, but that they are both simply seeking control in order to determine legislation for large interests. It is therefore distinctly encouraging that as a people we have come to the period of understanding and are beginning to recognize the weak points of our system of government. As now constituted it is really a protest against the binding of democracy by the machinery of politics until it is helpless. Nor do we propose to be ruled by the courts on the basis of precedent alone, regardless of the sense of the situation; hence the claim of the right of citizenship and the regulation of the powers of the courts. If the courts are to be used for the purpose of checking democracy, it is to be expected, and all history points to the same conclusion, that in time they themselves will be restricted. Consequently, the best friends of the judiciary to-day are not urging that they are beyond criticism or beyond the power of the majority, but that they should render their decisions on the basis of real justice. Just how seriously the proposals leading to the recall of judges and the development of the initiative and referendum will be taken depends entirely upon the conclusion that will come out of

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the final analysis of the present situation. In the early days of the republic Marshall established noble precedent for the common sense view, and it is more than likely that, despite all opinions to the contrary, when we come to the real determination of the question as to what shall be done with the judiciary, restriction of legislation with good sense will prevail.

II

The Problem of Immigration

From time to time the cry of exclusion has been raised in America against the incoming horde of European peoples, accompanied by evidence purporting to show the deterrent effect of such masses upon the body politic. In a single year one million people came from the various countries of Europe, and the figures of the census show conclusively that more than sixteen per cent of the total population are foreign born, while these masses increased by the first generation of children constitute two-fifths of the population of the nation. It is unquestionably true that great numbers of people, ignorant of the language, with different customs, social and economic, materially complicate the situation, and the burden placed upon the educational system of the country to give to the children of the immigrant a training that will ultimately make them Americans is heavy indeed. The political situation too in the larger cities has been marked by wide departure from old national ideals, with a distinct tendency toward the growth of socialism, accelerated by the influence of foreigners in the industrial centers. For a century or more the nation has clung to Sunday observance, but the prepossest ideas of most of the immigrants from continental Europe are in opposition to this view. The result is a large degree of non-enforcement in all of the great American cities, with a general demand that the American states shall abandon the idea of Sunday observance and put in its place the idea of a day of rest for all workers, made compulsory by law.

In industrial lines the old cry that the European immigrants tended to lower the wage rate thru competition has been materially modified, as shown by the strikes in various cities where the foreign worker predominates. With a closer study of the situation the extreme views held a few years ago have been materially modified, and now that immigration has shown its value, the attempt should be made, as suggested by a recent national commission, to encourage it under certain conditions, such as thoro inspection, protection against unskilled labor thru the utilization of a literacy test, the exclusion of

single men, limitation of the number admitted to a port, and an increase in the head tax, especially upon men without families. While there has been raised the question whether the views concerning immigration have not been too conservative, and whether the assimilation, physical and social, does not begin sooner and progress more rapidly than has hitherto been believed, it is now being urged that such assimilation of immigration is not detrimental to American growth, due to the fact that assimilation produces in the long run a better physical and mental type. It has been proven by history, at least, that race blending is productive of a virile people and that inferiority has been due to inability to enjoy the fruits of inventive genius. It would appear then that inter-marriage, the provisions of a great educational system, and the exercise of political rights, all have a tendency to produce upon the foreigner a marked change in his physical, intellectual, and social conditions, and in the long run will produce a better type of American.

As opposed to this view we are told that the frontier has passed, that the native stock is gradually declining, as seen in the lower birth rate (tho this statement has by no means been proven) and that sooner or later the American as such will cease to exist. In the exploitation of our territory millions of immigrants have helped. The process of development has been to move on when the present heritage has been exhausted. Consequently, the situation to-day is markedly different from what it was forty years ago, for then free land abounded, there was an opportunity everywhere for men to come in contact with nature, while to-day we are accumulating rapidly a population of more than one hundred millions. Our situation, however, differs radically from that of other countries having great populations, for the reason that manufacturing, mining, and other industries are outstripping agriculture. The urban population is increasing three times as fast as that of the country districts. The injection of modern education into this situation has raised the general level of intelligence so that the differences in society between the educated rich and the educated poor are not so great as in earlier times, but on the other hand universal education has increased the competition for material comforts, and with the ending of land expansion it has become insistent. Consequently, with the long years of preparation that are now devoted to industrial and professional training, the urging of intellectual advancement tends to check population on the part of the native stock, and as the assimilated foreign population comes more and more under

the influence of these calls to higher development, the retarding of the birth rate will unquestionably take place.

It should be said here that a considerable body of investigators and thinkers maintain that it is not possible to assimilate such a mass of immigration, especially when it is accompanied by a decline in the industrial status of the population already in the country. But as to that no one can speak with authority.

We have been told that there is a great and increasing body of chronic wretchedness in the United States. One authority has been so imprest as to estimate that no less than eighteen million persons are below the efficiency basis of livelihood. It hardly need be pointed out that this is one-fifth of the population at the present time, and that while there is much truth in the statement, the figures are undoubtedly overdrawn. Other writers call attention to the fact that we are moving rapidly towards a feudal state of land ownership, with the great proprietor, the tenant farmer, and the agricultural laborer. In the year 1910, however, sixty-three per cent of the farms in America were owned and operated by the men who held the titles, while tenants operated thirty-seven per cent. There were in the year 1910, 6,340,000 farms whose acreage had decreased in the preceding ten years from 146 to 138 acres. The average age of the tenants was below forty-five and that of the owners above forty-five. This would seem to show a distinctly healthy growth in the right direction. The farm production of the country reached the enormous figure of nearly nine billions of dollars, and while it is true that the cities are growing three times as fast as the country districts, it is not to be supposed that such phenomena will continue long.

An example from the history of Europe shows that similar phenomena existed, one during the heyday of the Roman Empire and the other during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Professor Bücher makes the statement that "every transitional epoch has its inconveniences and its sufferings, but the modern movement of population, in so far as it is expressed in the influx into the cities, will, like that of mediaeval times, reach its goal and then subside. This goal can be none other than to assign to every individual capacity and to every local group of persons that place and role in the great national life in which its endowment and the altered technical conditions of economic activity best fit it to contribute to the general welfare." It does not follow, if we are to accept the point of view here presented, that the nation is likely to be overwhelmed by the immigration now taking place, and especially is this

true in view of the attempts being made, thru legislation, thru social activities, thru larger industrial opportunities, and thru greater co-operation of state officials with federal immigration officials, to take care of the immigrant who now comes to America.

III

Influences Affecting the Family

It is impossible to understand American history if one does not have the point of view of the evolutionary process, marked now and then by periods of unusual acceleration. It would be natural to suppose that the unprecedented economic development of the last thirty years, the unparalleled achievements in social progress that have taken place, and the remarkable transitions in religious and ethical views should affect materially the family. As a unit the family is constantly subjected to changes in environment, and these increased complications of industry, such as the cost of living, greater competition, the growth of wants, the appearance of ostentation, have all borne heavily upon the store of the family. The phrase so often heard in America, "It is cheaper to board," carries with it an immense meaning, which is an announcement in the vernacular that the economic function of the family is passing away. In the past woman has always borne her share of the work, but the changing conditions which have come with the passing of the years have taken much of this work from the home, and at the same time given her a larger outlook, more freedom, and greater choice of vocations. Looked at from this point of view, it is not remarkable that the divorce rate in the United States should have increased to unheard of proportions. In the twenty years from 1867 to 1886, 330,000 divorces, in round numbers, were granted by the courts; in the twenty years following, ending in 1906, three times as many divorces were granted. The figures for 1900 go to show that for every 100,000 of married population, 200 divorces have been granted. Nor is it surprising that these figures should bring alarm, and to many be the indication of a breakdown in moral fiber that is deplorable and threatening to the life of the nation. It may be said, however, that the unrest of our times exhibits on the contrary an upward growth of moral view and not a downward one. Under the pressure of conventionality, of law, and of ethical point of view, many marriages have continued in name when actually dissolved in fact. The greater freedom of women and the franker consideration of the marriage situation have brought about the results that have thus far been set forth. The family is now being tested upon its merits; woman

is no longer compelled to tolerate the evils that she put up with under the old conditions; she can insist upon an equal standard of morals, and out of it will be developed a higher ideal of domestic happiness, with a new basis of sexual morality. Looked at in this way the very factors that produce the divorce rate are the ones to which we must look for the salvation of the family in the future. Says Ambassador Bryce: "On the whole, there seem to be no grounds for concluding that the increase of divorces in America necessarily points to a decline in the standard of domestic morality, except perhaps in a small section of the wealthy class; though it must be admitted that if this increase should continue it may tend to induce such a decline."

The student of the industrial conditions of the 19th century recognizes that the stress of economic forces upon the family has been unusual in the last half of that century. It is not likely that we shall see such a series of forces bearing down upon the family unit again as in this period. This lack of adjustment in the family circle is not any more surprising than that to be found in other fields. It is one of the growing pains of a people passing thru a serious adjustment of their social organization. Says one of the wisest of American sociologists, Mr. Franklin H. Giddings: "The acceptance of a saner love between a man and a woman, who would live together and be parents, is the one workable and decent foundation of the marriage relation." This view is coming to be more and more accepted in America, and while yet ideal, it points to a new standard for the maintenance of the family.

IV

The Influence of Educational and Philanthropic Forces

The people of America believe that they have in their educational system an offset for most of the disastrous tendencies now at work in the nation. From the beginning the school established and maintained by taxation has been harbored as the great savior of the American democracy. With great pride we have pointed to its accomplishments, and not without justification. In the year 1800 there were twenty-four colleges in the United States; to-day there are nearly five hundred, while at the same time there has taken place an amazing growth of popular means of education, such as Chautauqua schools, night schools, extension lectures, and a widespread development of periodical literature. More than eighteen million pupils are registered in the public schools of America and there are half a million teachers in the service of the different school districts. In the maintenance of this vast system the people pay $450,000,000 annually. One and a half million students are found in the schools and colleges of the land. The working income of the 494 institutions of higher learning was more than seventy millions, while 250,000 students attended under the instruction of 23,000 professors and instructors. The states formed from the Northwest Territory established public universities which were to perform the dual function of furnishing liberal and specialized education. The students in the public secondary schools in 1890 numbered 25,086; in 1909 842,000. In percentages the attendance upon the different divisions of education was: elementary 93%, secondary 5.3%, colleges and universities 2%. In the thirty year period from 1880 to 1910 illiteracy was reduced from 17% to 7.7%, while the population during the same period increased 80%. The actual number of illiterates in 1910 was 5,516,163; in 1880 the number was 6,239,958. The remarkable fact about this vast educational system is that it is organized under the different states, each with its own legislative government and direction, but despite this territorial division the school authorities have kept in touch with each other, and advancements in one place have been accepted by the schools in another. The plans are the same, the ideals are the same, and there is no area so large on the face of the earth where one language is accepted as the sole medium of speech and where the educational system is so uniform over the area. Notwithstanding the commonwealth organizations, there are many tendencies and many agencies which work toward uniformity. The federal bureau of education, the different boards created thru the generosity of Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Carnegie, the various funds, and the associations of teachers, all work toward common ideals and points of view. Moreover, there has been a recognition of the fact that industrial and vocational training should be provided for the preparation of young people for specific industries. This is a movement away from the earlier manual training ideas and the theory that education should be the same for all classes, since the principle involved was that of equality. There is also a tendency away from the narrower forms of industrial training to those of a broader type. This applies both to the programs of the schools and general establishments. As a consequence of this view trade schools and vocational courses are making their appearance in the industrial communities. Altho this means a recognition of the passing of the idea of equality of opportunity, nevertheless it is in conformity with the facts and the conditions, and is not likely to lead the democracy

into greater difficulties than the ideas that prevailed in the earlier time.

V

The Growth of Democratic Ideals

In my opinion a careful observer can see a steady growth of real democratic ideals, despite the appearance of plutocracy and the domination of interests in specific fields. The growth in practical morality, tho accompanied by a decrease in emotional religion, has been toward a larger realization of what America is and with what it is faced. There are many influences at work which tend to shake the vitality, the courage and the manliness of the race, but on the other hand, in the service of the railways and of corporations, in field and forest, are men engaged in industries where hardiness, manliness and courage are required. Without question men are more gentle and honest to-day, and no less brave than they have been in previous periods of time. We have in the United States a great nation thronging with wage-earners, and they are a virile people, capable of raising an army huge in numbers, and each ready to bear his share of the burden of maintaining and protecting the state. As an economic man, however, he wishes to add to his prosperity; he proposes to have legal and political freedom, and if he feels dissatisfied with the difficulties of obtaining needed legislation, fears that there is a failure of justice, and is certain of the inefficiency of legal administration, these are to be regarded as hopeful signs rather than otherwise.

It cannot be gainsaid that there has not taken place in the last fifty years particularly a marked change and modification in the form of American society and in the government which it has developed. The nation is now attempting to find a way to preserve its republican character and to continue the maintenance of democracy. That there has been a change cannot be denied; a change in public opinion, a change in the attitude of the courts, a change in the views of men rich with money. Great philanthropies are being developed, gifts are being made as bequests for the alleviation of conditions, the causes of vice and poverty are now looked upon as having a social basis which comes out of society itself. We have gone a long way since the creation of the constitution and the establishment of the federal government, a long way from the view that things can be accomplished by letting them go their own way. Little by little regulation has come about; the theory of non-interference has been abandoned, and we are setting up here and there various types of

governmental machinery to protect the interests of the common people. But this development which is to be seen at the present time is not going on in accordance with the socialistic view. The tendency is toward a new type of communism, whose attitude is determined by the question of expediency or the wisdom of the courts. Labor disputes and arbitration, the regulation of immigration, the judiciary control of railway rights, interference in matters that affect the health of the community, the establishment of building regulations, all point to a new view of government.

The unrest which exists in the United States to-day is indicative of the adjustment that is taking place along all lines. Thru the medium of proposals that are now being made it is hoped that another adjustment can be brought about between the two elements, democracy and aristocracy, which have faced each other thruout the entire history of the people. Looking back over the decade ending in 1910, we have no doubt that it will be put down, as said in the beginning, as one of the great periods in the history of America, one that will compare favorably with the period just before the formation of the federal constitution. Says Alexander D. Noyes,* the eminent writer on finance in America: "Possibly after a reasonable lapse of time, when what is now controversy has become settled history, even the most conservative and old fashioned of us will understand why, in the normal course of human progress, it was necessary that in 1911 the House of Lords should be shorn of its hereditary power, that the continental proletariat should revolt against increasing taxation and extra armaments, that decrepit monarchical systems should be swept away, and that the United States should demand the dissolution of industrial combinations which in the wild promotion period of the last ten years had acquired absolute, or potentially absolute, dictatorial power over American industry."

* Atlantic Monthly, May, 1912.

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